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The treatment of the territorial period is somewhat briefer and naturally does not contain so much that is absolutely new; one feels that it has less attraction for the writer. Too much space, it would seem, has been given to biographical detail; the Boones Lick settlements certainly do not receive sufficient attention; it is rather surprising that more use has not been made of the files of the *Gazette* at St. Louis, especially for the local history of the Compromise struggle. Still it remains by far the best account as yet of the period. The discussion of social conditions is particularly valuable.

The book has certain faults incident to the lack of special training which the author so frankly confesses in his preface. Although the foot-notes and references are very numerous, the sources of information, especially in biographical details, are not always clear. A list of authorities would add to the value of the whole work and would, probably, have obviated the lack of uniformity in the citing of titles. It should be more clearly indicated that the numerous references to Hunt's Minutes are to the copy in the possession of the Missouri Historical Society, not to the original at Jefferson City. The indefinite references to the collections of this society, however, are unavoidable in the present condition of its invaluable material.

The history is clearly written and despite the mass of factual information is redeemed from dullness by the enthusiasm, and, especially in the later chapters, by the shrewd common-sense of the writer. But unless one is familiar with the unorganized condition of the materials and the lack of preliminary studies, he cannot appreciate the difficulties of the subject, nor how successfully, on the whole, Mr. Houck has surmounted them. He has done a real service to the student of to-day and laid a broad foundation for the future. Mention should be made of the numerous well-executed reproductions of maps and portraits. The index is voluminous and apparently adequate.

JONAS VILES.

The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise: its Origin and Authorship.

By P. ORMAN RAY, Ph.D., Professor of History and Political Science, Pennsylvania State College. (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Company. 1909. Pp. 315.)

“THE preceding pages have been written in vain”, concludes the author of this doctoral dissertation, “if they do not justify the conclusion that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 had its real origin in western conditions and particularly in the peculiar political conditions existing in the State of Missouri and that the real originator of the Repeal was David R. Atchison.” But surely one may dissent from the latter conclusion without feeling that Dr. Ray has written in vain. The investigation of the Western antecedents of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was decidedly worth while. If Dr. Ray

has not attained a new point of view, at least he has presented a fresh and suggestive account of the Missouri factional struggle between 1852 and 1854, and he has established successfully the contention that there was a popular demand in the trans-Mississippi country for the organization of the Nebraska territory.

The claim that Atchison was the originator of the repeal may be termed a recrudescence of the conspiracy theory first asserted by Colonel John A. Parker of Virginia in 1880. No new manuscript material has been found to support the theory, but the available bits of evidence have been collated carefully in this volume. It is argued that Douglas was not particularly interested in Nebraska, that he did not introduce any bill for the territorial organization of Nebraska between 1848 and 1854, and that he had "no motive of political preservation" which could have led him to originate the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, until Atchison, hard pressed by the Benton faction, forced this course upon him with dire threats.

In view of the lively interest which Douglas at all times exhibited in the fate of the country between Missouri and our Pacific possessions, it is difficult to understand why he should be accounted indifferent to Nebraska. He did not, it is true, *introduce* any bill for the territorial organization of Nebraska between 1848 and 1854, but he gave his hearty support to the Hall Bill of 1853, which in all essential points was like his own bill of 1848. Dr. Ray has quite overlooked, too, the interesting debate upon the bill which Douglas introduced in 1852 for military colonies along the emigrant route to California. That the real purpose of this measure was to colonize Nebraska and prepare the way for its territorial organization, does not admit of doubt.

Even if absence of motive on the part of Douglas could be proved, positive evidence would be needed to support the claims of Atchison. Lacking other support, Dr. Ray falls back upon Atchison's own statement, preferring to believe Atchison drunk rather than Douglas sober. It was not until September, 1854, that Atchison under the influence of liquor boasted: "Douglas don't deserve the credit of this Nebraska bill. I told Douglas to introduce it. I originated it." But in a public letter written in June, Atchison made no such claims; and two years later he made the frank and apparently sober avowal, "I do not say that I did it [*i. e.*, secured the repeal], but I was a prominent agent." So far from proving that Atchison originated the repeal in order to triumph over Benton, the evidence would seem to show that the people of western Missouri were clamoring for the repeal before Atchison announced his conversion to the policy, and that he utilized rather than originated the movement for his personal political profit.

ALLEN JOHNSON.